



U.S. Mint Wins Maryland Quality Award

October 9, 1998

Customer Care Center in Lanham, Maryland, is Bronze Winner

Washington, D.C. — U.S. Senator Paul S. Sarbanes yesterday presented U.S. Mint Director Philip N. Diehl with a bronze Maryland Quality Award, honoring the work of the Mint's Customer Care Center, at the 1998 Maryland Excellence Conference in Baltimore.

"This award is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of our staff at the Customer Care Center," said Mint Director Diehl. "We have consistently demanded a higher and higher level of performance from our customer service team, and their commitment and results have been impressive."

The award recognized the Mint's significant gains toward achieving best-in-business customer service: The center now averages 90 percent of all orders delivered within three weeks, with overnight delivery provided on select items; 98 percent of orders requesting overnight delivery in 1997 were shipped within one day; and customer telephone inquiries are now answered within an average of six seconds, down from 50 seconds in 1996, and two minutes in 1995.

Located in Lanham, Maryland, the Mint's Customer Care Center is the primary provider of customer relations, order taking and account maintenance for the numismatic business of the U.S. Mint. The Mint manufactures and sells more than \$400 million of bullion coins, numismatic coins, commemorative coins and medals, and coin-based personal accessories worldwide.

Approximately one-quarter of those revenues originate through the customer service center via 1.1 million regular purchasers of Mint products. At the Customer Care Center, nearly 80 employees perform four major functions: taking 2 million phone and mail orders annually; processing around \$100 million in payments each year; answering all customer inquiries and processing all refunds and returned merchandise.

The conference, which was sponsored by the Maryland Center for Quality and Productivity (MCQP) at the University of Maryland, recognizes outstanding organizations and fosters performance excellence in Maryland businesses and organizations. This year's theme focused on instituting management practices that lead to breakthrough performance.

Established in 1978, the Maryland Center for Quality and Productivity promotes the improvement of quality and productivity in Maryland organizations. The annual award recognizes delivery of ever-improving value to customers, resulting in marketplace success, and improvement of overall organization performance and capabilities.

Other bronze award winners included M/A COM Government Products Operation, a division of AMP, Inc.; the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, and the Western Maryland Hospital Center. Silver award winners included the Indian Head Division of the Naval Surface Warfare Center, and Johnson Controls, Inc. of NAS Patuxent River, Maryland. The Baltimore Performance Cluster of the United States Postal Service took home the Gold Maryland Quality Award.

The 1998 Senate Productivity Award, also presented at the Conference, was won by AlliedSignal Technical Services Corporation, based in Columbia, Maryland.

Since 1983, Maryland's U.S. Senators have honored the quality, productivity and business achievements of Maryland organizations by presenting the Senate Productivity Award for Maryland. In 1997, the Maryland Quality Award was added to expand recognition of leading organizations in Maryland, using the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award Criteria as a basis for judging.

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